

Amendments to and Listing of the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A strapping machine for positioning a strap material around an associated load, tensioning the strap material and sealing the strap material to itself around the load, the strapping machine comprising:

a frame;

a strap supply;

a slack box;

a first portion of a strap path ~~from adjacent~~ adjacent the slack box, the first portion of the strap path formed by inner and outer paddles independently ~~a pair of opposing path-forming elements~~ moveable toward and away from each other between an open path position and a closed path position, the path forming elements further defining a path entrance and a path exit, the closed path position defining the first portion of the strap path;

a strapping head mounted to the frame, the strapping head configured to draw strap material from the strap supply, through the first portion of the strap path and to convey the strap material in a first direction to position the strap material around the load and to convey the strap material in a second direction to tension the strap material around the load, the strapping head further configured to seal the strap material to itself and to sever the strap material from a strap supply; and

a chute defining a second portion of the strap path, the chute being mounted to the frame and configured to provide a path to position the strap material around the load.

2. Cancelled.

3. (Currently amended) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 2 ~~1~~ wherein the paddles are locked into the closed path position.

4. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 3 including a biased locking pin cooperating with the inner paddle for locking the inner paddle in the closed

path position.

5. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 4 wherein the inner paddle is pivotally mounted to the frame, and wherein the inner paddle includes a notched opening for receiving the locking pin, the locking pin traversing through the notched opening as the paddle moves between the open and closed path positions.

6. (Currently amended) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 5 wherein the biased locking pin includes a pin mounted to the frame and a collar fitted about the pin, the locking pin including a spring disposed about the pin, between an end of the pin and the collar, the spring biasing the collar toward the frame.

7. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 6 wherein the notched opening in the inner paddle includes an enlarged area and wherein the collar engages the enlarged area to maintain the inner paddle in the closed path position.

8. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 5 wherein the inner paddle is pivotally mounted to the frame about a pivot spaced from the locking pin.

9. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 8 wherein the locking pin is disposed intermediate the path entrance and the path exit, and wherein the pivot is disposed between the locking pin and path entrance.

10. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 3 including a biased locking pin cooperating with the outer paddle for locking the outer paddle in the closed path position.

11. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 10 wherein the

outer paddle is pivotally mounted to the frame, and wherein the outer paddle includes a notched opening for receiving the locking pin, the locking pin traversing through the notched opening as the paddle moves between the open and closed path positions.

12. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 11 wherein the biased locking pin includes a pin mounted to the frame and a collar fitted about the pin, the locking pin including a spring disposed about the pin, between the pin and the collar, the spring biasing the collar toward the frame.

13. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 12 wherein the notched opening in the outer paddle includes an enlarged area and wherein the collar engages the enlarged area to maintain the outer paddle in the closed path position.

14. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 11 wherein the outer paddle is pivotally mounted to the frame about a pivot spaced from the locking pin.

15. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 14 wherein the locking pin is disposed intermediate the path entrance and the path exit, and wherein the pivot is disposed at about the path exit.

16. (Currently amended) A strapping machine for positioning a strap material around an associated load, tensioning the strap material and sealing the strap material to itself around the load, the strapping machine comprising:

a frame;

a slack box mounted to the frame;

a strapping head mounted to the frame downstream of the slack box; and

a strap chute mounted to the frame downstream of the strapping head, wherein;

a strap path between the slack box and the strapping head, a first portion of a the strap

path from the slack box to the strapping head ~~is being~~ formed by a pair of opposing path forming elements pivotally moveable toward and away from each other between an open path position and a closed path position, the path forming elements further defining a path entrance adjacent the slack box and a path exit adjacent the strapping head, the closed path position defining the first portion of the strap path, the path forming elements being movable independent of one another and lockable into the closed path position, at least one of the elements being lockable by a locking pin assembly cooperating with the one of the elements.

17. (Original) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 16 wherein the locking pin assembly is received in a notched opening in the at least one path forming element, the locking pin assembly traversing through the notched opening.

18. (Currently amended) The strapping machine in accordance with claim 16 wherein the locking pin assembly includes a pin mounted to the frame and a collar fitted about the pin, the locking pin assembly including a spring disposed about the pin, between an end of the pin and the collar, the spring biasing the collar toward the frame.

19. (Currently amended) In a strapping machine of the type having a frame, a slack box, a strapping head and a strap chute mounted to the frame with the strapping head positioned between the slack box and the strap chute to draw strap material from the slack box and to feed strap material into the strap chute, the strapping machine configured for positioning a strap material around an associated load, tensioning the strap material and sealing the strap material to itself around the load, a ~~first portion of a~~ strap path positioned between the slack box and the strapping head, comprising:

a pair of opposing path forming elements pivotally moveable toward and away from each other between an open path position and a closed path position, the path forming elements further defining a path entrance and a path exit, the closed path position defining the first portion of the strap path, the path forming elements being movable independent of one another and lockable

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Amendment A

into the closed path position, at least one of the elements being lockable by a locking pin assembly cooperating with the one of the elements.